

# Caring for filipino patients with cancer



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Caring for Filipino Patients with Cancer Total Number of Words: 587

Summary Some of the American health care practices are not aligned with the Asian culture especially when it comes to the health care services rendered by the health care professionals. As compared to the American physicians and nurses, Filipino physicians and nurses would normally give equal importance to the patients' family members who are taking care of the cancer patients. Likewise, Filipino cancer patients would normally prefer to have their family members and love ones to be around them to give emotional, physical, and financial support (Harle et al., 2007).

The problem with the American health care practices lies behind the fact that most of the American physicians are practicing paternalistic decision-making and patient autonomy (Schmit, 2005). In line with this, most of the American physicians are not aware that the practice of too much paternalistic decision-making and patient autonomy can lead to Filipino cancer patients' dissatisfaction with regards to the health care services they receive from the U. S.-based hospitals.

The problem with the use of pure American health care system is that the American physicians may sometimes tend to forget about knowing how a Filipino cancer patient would prefer to discuss their treatment and care (Harle et al., 2007; Schmit, 2005). For example: It is possible that most of the Filipino cancer patients would prefer to have at least one of their family members to be present while discussing the patient's health diagnosis including the recommended treatment or medication that can enable the cancer patient to alleviate pain. Since American physicians are trained to practice patient autonomy and confidentiality, most of Filipino cancer patients are not able to be with their family members at the time the

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physician would discuss about their diagnosis.

### Nursing Implications and Interventions

By nature, Filipinos are not confrontational. For this reason, nurses should assure the patients that it is good to ask them questions whenever they have doubts about the care and treatment they are receiving from the hospital and health care professionals (Schmit, 2005).

For example: In case a cancer patient is given a new medication, nurses should make the patient know that they have the right to know about the name of drug and purpose of the medication given to them by the nurses. In line with this, cancer patients or patients in general will always have the right to refuse to take the medication.

Despite the cultural differences between the American nurses and Filipino cancer patients, nurses should always build a friendly rapport with the patients in order to increase their comfort level while being admitted at the local hospitals (Schmit, 2005).

For example: Nurses should always make it a habit to smile and greet the patients each morning or before caring for the cancer patients. Basically, being the first one to open up a conversation with the patient can make them feel more comfortable whenever the nurses are around the area.

Given that most Filipinos are not comfortable in talking about their personal emotions and other concerns, nurses should encourage Filipino cancer patients to join a group therapy or support groups to encourage them to learn how to share their thoughts with other cancer patients (Schmit, 2005).

For example: In case the cancer patient lives in California, nurses can recommend the patient and the patient's family members to join the Seattle

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Cancer Care Alliance whenever possible (Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, 2009). This particular health care strategy will enable the Filipino cancer patient and his/her family members to learn how to cope with the disease.

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#### References

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